



Session update from Olympia

May 25 , 2011



Pictured above: Senate Minority Leader Mike Hewitt (R-Walla Walla), Senate Majority Leader Brown, Ranking Ways & Means Member, Senator Joe Zarelli (R-Ridgefield) at a press conference announcing the operating budget agreement.

Senator Brown guides a bipartisan budget agreement that delivers for Spokane in Tough Times

Yesterday legislative leaders announced a bipartisan agreement on both the operating and capital budgets for the upcoming biennium.

Both budgets contain some great news for Spokane – the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC) and the Riverpoint Biomedical Health Services Building, in particular.

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To say this has been a grueling session would be an understatement. Despite the tough decisions we had to make, we put together budgets that are fiscally responsible for the future and contain compassionate solutions for the present. The budget climate this year is one of the most difficult climates we've ever faced in the state. But even still, we managed to make investments that are critical to our economy and community here in Spokane.

On the operating side, thanks in large part to the concern and hard work of the people in our community, the doors of Spokane's Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture will remain open. Governor Chris Gregoire's budgets, unveiled in December, proposed closing the MAC permanently, but the final operating budget includes \$2.965 million to keep the MAC operational. I want you to know that your letters, phone calls and e-mails really made a difference in ensuring that this important museum in the 3rd District remain open.

In addition to funding for the MAC, other local highlights include: \$7.1 million for a technology consortium that includes SIRTII; funding for street youth which funds Crosswalk locally; an additional \$1.8 million for the medical school for expansion in Spokane and Eastern Washington and for curriculum development; and \$500,000 for WSU's Applied Sciences Laboratory at Riverpoint.

I am thrilled to announce that there is \$35 million in the final capital budget for construction of the yet-to-be-built medical school. That is estimated to cover about half the cost of the total project. The governor's proposal had included no funding for the medical school, which will be located on Washington State University's Spokane Riverpoint campus.

The medical school was my number-one capital budget priority for the session. I have and will continue to strongly support the shared vision for expanding medical education and research in Spokane on the Riverpoint Campus. The nation is short some 150,000 physicians, and Eastern and Central Washington have among the lowest rates of physicians per 10,000 population in the country. The medical school in Spokane will improve health care access, improve quality of care, and make a sustainable economic impact.

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The mere construction of the facility will create hundreds of direct jobs, and the \$70 million dollar facility will have a \$122.3 million dollar economic impact output for two years. The sustainable economic impact upon completion will be \$2 billion per year and 13,000 new jobs at full build-out by 2030, according to a recent study.

The capital budget also has other notable investments locally:

- Patterson Hall at Eastern Washington University - \$17,647,000
- The Arc of Spokane - \$862,000
- The Salvation Army's Center for Nurturing Families & Children - \$56,000
- Spokane Falls Community College Classrooms - \$17,647,000
- 2nd Harvest Food Bank's project to renovate and expand their facility to process bulk perishable food donations \$1,250,000
- The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program fully funds acquisition of additional land for the beautiful Antoine Peak conservation area at \$1,633,198

The operating and capital budgets are likely to be voted upon by both chambers today, the final day of the 30-day special session. You can view a summary of the operating budget by clicking [here](#) and a summary of the capital budget by clicking [here](#). They will then have to be signed into law by the governor.

Thank you again for keeping in touch with me throughout this legislative session. I am looking forward to returning home to Spokane!

Sincerely,



Click [here](#) for contact information for my Olympia or Spokane office.